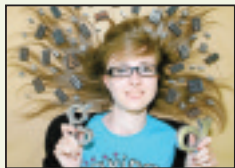


the chronicle

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Metal thief stole to raise cash for home deposit

A thief stole thousands of pounds worth of metal from a Cradley Heath firm to raise the deposit on a new home for him and his girlfriend, a court heard.

Leigh Clarke, aged 42, carried out three raids on Sims Metal Management between June 9 and July 9 this year, taking copper piping, brass fittings and scrap metal. The third raid was carried out when he was on bail. He also damaged an oxygen ring

used by the firm when removing the copper piping which cost nearly £5,000 to repair.

Clarke, of The Kingsway, Wollaston Farm, Stourbridge, was on bail for breaking into a disused substation at The Hayes, Lye, on July 2.

Dudley Magistrates Court was told he and another man had climbed a 6ft security fence and 8ft wall to get in.

They found there was nothing inside to take and when they left the

building police arrested them. Clarke pleaded guilty to three counts of theft and burglary of the substation at a previous hearing.

He was sentenced to 18 months jail suspended for 12 months, ordered to carry out 150 hours unpaid work, put under supervision for a year and told to pay £170 costs.

Mr Mark Cooper, prosecuting, said the firm had estimated the total cost of the metal taken to be around

£2,000. "Alongside the damage caused, the firm also lost trade because they were not able to use the oxygen ring for a time," he said.

"He removed the gas fittings from bottles using a knife and a spanner." Mr Bernard Porter, defending, said for a long period Clarke had been homeless with a drug habit.

"However he has now turned his life around. He has a girlfriend and they have moved into a house

together. However the tenancy is only temporary," he said.

"To move into another property they need a deposit and it was attempting to raise this money he committed these crimes."

"He fell into the trap of using the wrong methods to secure this money." Chairman of magistrates Phillip Hannah said Clarke had narrowly escaped jail and said they had given him the "biggest chance of his life".

Closure of fire stations will happen, says union

Plans to close Halesowen and Cradley Heath fire stations will go ahead despite a consultation being opened.

Fire Brigade Union bosses say West Midlands Fire Service has admitted that reversing the decision to close the two stations is not up for discussion at the two public consultation meetings next month.

The fire service wants to merge the stations and create a new single base.

But the move would mean the loss of one of the 24-hour fire crews in the area, sparking fury from union chiefs.

The union says at least 28 frontline firefighter posts could be affected.

In a statement in March, West Midlands Fire Service said a review would be carried out "to identify all potential solutions" and the public would be consulted.

Discuss

But it now appears a decision has already been taken to axe the stations in Mace Street, Cradley Heath, and Hagley Road, Halesowen.

West Midlands Fire Service spokeswoman Lindsey Preece confirmed that the forthcoming consultation will only discuss the proposal to have one vehicle based at a new location.

She added: "The decision to merge the stations was taken back in 2009 after a period of consultation. A project is in place to identify the most suitable location."

Fire Brigade Union West Midlands regional secretary Chris Downes said it was a "very, very sad day" for the service in the area.

He said: "Lives will be put at risk because you can't be in two places at once."

Public meetings will take place on September 1 at Lutley Community Centre, in Brookwillow Road, Halesowen, and September 2 at Reddall Hill Primary School, Trinity Street, Old Hill.

Centre gains access award

Halesowen Leisure Centre has scooped a national award for making its facilities easy to access. It gained the "access performance" gong at the Annual National Benchmarking Awards.

It was judged against other similar-sized centres from across the UK. The centre was recognised for its community work through events including women-only swimming classes and fitness sessions for over-50s.

Councillor David Stanley, cabinet member for environment and culture, said: "I would like to congratulate the staff at the centre on their hard work which has culminated in winning this award. There is something for everyone at our leisure centres and I hope more residents will take the opportunity to visit to find out."

Two are quizzed after stabbing attack

A 29-year-old man was stabbed several times in a daylight attack at a churchyard in Halesowen town centre.

He was attacked in the graveyard of St John the Baptist Church, off The Queensway, on Monday.

He was taken to Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital but his injuries are not thought to be life-threatening.

Officers found the victim in the churchyard when they arrived at about 4.30pm.

Witnesses reported hearing shouts and seeing three or four men running away.

Another man was seen walking away with blood pouring from his head.

The area was cordoned off for about three hours.

Noise

John Davis, aged 57, who owns J Davis Insurance Services in The Queensway, said: "I heard a lot of noise and shouting so I looked out of the upstairs window and saw flashes of dark coats as men ran among the bushes and trees."

"A man with blood on his head was being led away by another man. The police hadn't turned up at this point."

A 51-year-old man was arrested a short time after the incident and was still in custody on Wednesday.

A 54-year-old man arrested in the early hours of Tuesday was released on police bail.

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 03451135000 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

I'LL BEAT THIS - CANCER MAN

West Bromwich Albion kitman Dave Matthews has opened up about his battle with cancer – and revealed he has set himself a target of returning to work before Christmas. The long-standing club servant was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma shortly after the home game against Everton in May.

But the Halesowen father-of-two insisted that his mood had remained upbeat.

"It will depend on the outcome of my treatment but my plan is to get back to work," he said.

"I need something to aim at, something to help me get through this."

"To be back at work before Christmas, that is my goal."

Mr Matthews, aged 65, went to Albion's doctor after a spotting a lump on his neck. After being diagnosed he said he remained calm. "My wife and daughters were worried but, to me, cancer is just a word," he said. "I know I can overcome it."

Shaved

Mr Matthews has already had three sessions of chemotherapy.

He has been off work since May and had to cancel a two-week holiday to Croatia, which was due to take place in June.

He said: "My hair has all fallen out but that doesn't bother me because some people pay to have their heads shaved."

"My voice has gone husky. They think it could be due to the treatment. I have been told I can't go into crowded areas because I'm vulnerable to infections. But the side-effects so far have been minimal."

Mr Matthews said he had many texts from players and coaching staff including manager Roy Hodgson.



Dave in the boot room at the Baggies



Albion kit-man Dave Matthews who is battling cancer

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Roadshow on TV switchover

A series of roadshows are being held in Dudley town centre to help residents with the digital television switchover.

The Sutton Coldfield transmitter, broadcasting to the homes in the Central region, will switch to digital in September.

Switchover advisers will be visiting the borough, offering advice and help about how to get ready for digital TV. They will be based at Dudley Market Place on September 7, 8, 21 and 22 between 9am and 5pm.

Pub is forced to close over noise complaints

Dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

A pub will be forced to shut for three months after residents complained of a spate of late-night discos, loud music and customers drinking outside its entrance.

Residents called in police and council enforcement officers numerous times in the past two years to the Painters Arms pub, in Coseley. Pamela Lawrence, who has lived nearby for 10 years, compiled a diary of the disturbances saying she had "felt like a prisoner in her own home".

"I have been worried at the beginning of the week about what could be going on at the pub the following weekend," she said.

"It is an unpleasant position and situation to have been put in."

Around 27 complaints were made by families living near the pub, in Avenue Road.

These concerns centred on music being heard playing past its 11pm curfew and people drinking alcohol outside its front entrance.

Breaching

Residents and Dudley Council also alleged discos encouraging dancing and karaoke nights had been held breaching its recorded music only licence.

Dudley Council's licensing committee agreed to suspend the premise licence for three months last month.

Committee chairman Councillor Julian Ryder ordered landlord Graham Watkins to comply with a series of conditions.

He will have to fit a noise limiter to the pub's jukebox stopping it exceeding decibel limits and improve soundproofing to windows including a number of skylights.

Councillor Ryder said residents had "valid complaints" about noise levels and general disturbance.

Speaking at the meeting, Dudley Council officer Dolores Nellany claimed the pub had not heeded numerous warning letters and visits by police.

Mr Watkins claims problems have been caused since smoking was banned. He said: "We are constantly telling people to come back in and not take their drinks out to the front when they go outside to smoke." His solicitor said he disputed some of the incidents in Mrs Lawrence's diary.

You're my type - Fiona designs her own font



Graphics student Fiona Clarke with some of the letters she designed while attending Halesowen College

A CREATIVE student from Brierley Hill has tapped out her own typeface and is already spelling success for the future.

Fiona Clarke, who studies graphics at Halesowen College, uploaded her collection on to www.dafont.com and has already received more than 27,000 hits. The 18-year-old hand drew each letter,

number and symbol into special software that allowed her font to be typed out.

Fiona, who has named her creation "Do you like my font, Andy?" after asking a friend for his opinion on a name, is now going on to study graphics at Birmingham City University to develop her project further. Gillian Dunkerley, graph-

ics course leader at Halesowen College, said: "Fiona is a treasure trove of creative ideas and is highly skilled in both illustration and graphics."

"Like many of our students she uses the computer as an everyday tool to develop and finalise her initial concepts, it is just like a posh pen to them."

Trains to get extra carriages

More than 3,000 extra spaces are to be created on trains running through the West Midlands.

Under a deal funded by the Government, four extra carriages are being created on London Midland routes.

The move will allow the company to bring in more services at extra times.

It will see around 900 extra spaces being created on the Stourbridge to Snow Hill line, while routes from Walsall, Hereford and Shrewsbury to Birmingham New Street will see just over 1,000 extra spaces created.

Leamington Spa and Stratford trains into Snow Hill will also benefit.

Managing director of London Midland Mike Hodson said: "We welcome this announcement from the Department for Transport which will create 3,276 extra spaces for commuters on our morning and evening services across the West Midlands region."

Cycle appeal

Cyclists in the Wyre Forest district can donate unwanted bikes to a charity which provides training for young people.

Motov8, based at Gregor's Mill Street, Worcester, takes in old bikes and restores them so they can be sold on. It also carries out servicing on cycles still in use. Call 01905 619088.

Court for sale

The former Halesowen Magistrates Court building has now been put up for sale.

The courthouse in Laurel Lane closed at the end of March as part of £41 million cost-cutting measures.



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Cinema and store in town centre rebuild

A major new department store and multiplex cinema will play key roles in a multi-million-pound revamp of Halesowen town centre, it has emerged.

Tens of millions of pounds of investment and the creation of hundreds of jobs is anticipated under Dudley Council's Halesowen Area Action Plan.

It contains proposals to knock down the popular but outdated Cornbow Hall, which hosts community events and music shows, and the adjacent multi-storey car park, and replace them with a department store and a new car park.

Cabinet member for regeneration, Councillor Angus Adams, said an hotel and 65,000 sq ft of new, smaller shops

were also in the council's plan for the town, to be implemented by 2026. "Land availability is one of the issues we have had to look at when putting this plan together - it's clearly tight in Halesowen, and if you are going to bring in major investments you have to make room for them," he said.

"This does mean we would look to knock down and relocate the Cornbow Hall.

"In addition, Halesowen does have a lack of entertainment facilities such as a cinema or bowling alley - the nearest cinema for example is either Quinton or Merry Hill.

"We want to introduce another leisure facility such as this so that people can go out and enjoy themselves without having to travel."

Councillor Adams added: "This has the added benefit of cutting congestion on the roads."

Congestion

The action plan outlines nine potential areas for development in the town centre.

Aside from Cornbow Hall, one of the main sites is the Trinity Point office block, which is currently three quarters empty.

Fountain House, which sits on the bank of the River Stour, is another target for redevelopment.

A report to Dudley councillors about on the plan states that despite years of proactive marketing, the office block has continued to stand vacant and could be put to more productive use.

A new public open square, linking Birmingham Street and Cobham Street, is also included in the plans.

Fancy dress running for Daniel

An 11-year-old Halesowen boy is running 23 miles in seven days - dressed as a ballerina.

Daniel Grogan is donning a tutu to support a children's charity that has helped his sister, Eleanor, aged 15.

He began on Sunday at the Clent Hills, and is running 3.75 miles each day at locations including Hagley and Halesowen until he reaches the finish at Arrow Valley Country Park, in Redditch on Saturday.

Daniel's new school, King Edward VI Five Ways, in Birmingham, asked pupils to do fundraising events during the summer, so he decided to put his fitness to the test - and thought fancy dress would encourage more people to sponsor him.

He said: "It's quite a brave thing for a boy to do but I thought it would get people's attention, and at least I won't get too hot."

Money raised will go to Rollercoasters, which runs three-week play schemes for children like Eleanor with learning difficulties.

Visit www.justgiving.com/sally-grogan1 to sponsor Daniel.



Daniel Grogan ready for his 23-mile running challenge dressed as a ballerina, with his sister Eleanor

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Bruce Screen's Ford Model T, once owned by John Bonham, in its airtight container

Bonham's 1915 car attracting buyers abroad

A classic car once owned by Led Zep-
pelin drummer John Bonham could
soon be leaving the Black Country and
heading abroad.

Blackheath resident Bruce Screen has
been the proud owner of the 1915 Ford
Model T for the past 11 years.

But now, after a story about his prize pos-
session appeared, he has received interest
from two potential buyers. One is a car col-
lector in Dubai and the other is a Led Zepp-
elin enthusiast in Washington.

Mr Screen has now said he is prepared to
sell – if the price is right.

"There is no mention of any money at the
moment and it's very difficult for me to put
a price on what the car is worth," he said.

"So I have decided the only fair way to
deal with it is to listen to their offers. If the
money is right, I might sell it."

Father-of-two Mr. Screen, aged 64,
obtained the vehicle in 2000. Three men

who made a different Ford Model T, a one-
off, had learned it was in Mr Screen's pos-
session and offered him the swap when he
refused to sell.

Since then he has kept it in an airtight
container in his garage, although it has
been exhibited at the NEC in Birmingham in
2006.

Connection

Two fans, which are plugged in constan-
tly, control conditions around the car,
ensuring they are at the optimum level for
preservation.

Mr Screen said he would be sorry to see
the car go, but added that he never gets it
out or drives it because he is worried about
getting it damaged.

Similar Ford Model T cars – without a
Led Zeppelin connection – have previously
sold for between £30,000 and £40,000.

Email enquiries at cypressnursery.co.uk
for information about the car.

Jobs lost as firm is shut down

A Cradley Heath construc-
tion company has closed sud-
denly with the loss of 13 jobs.
B-Trac Construction, based
on Broadwyn Trading
Estate, Waterfall Lane, went
into creditor's voluntary liq-
uidation while owing staff
wages and rent to its land-
lord.

Workers were laid off
immediately and will be
made redundant when the
company is liquidated.

Employees had been
working on a downstairs
bedroom conversion for a
disabled boy for Dudley
Council and a project to split
Smethwick's Cape Hill
Primary School's hall into
two classrooms, but were
told to down tools before fin-
ishing the schemes.

Director Paul Banner
said the company was
unable to pay wages due to
cash flow problems. He said:
"We had orders but no one
was paying us any cash."

Pride over anniversary

A chartered surveyor in
Dudley is celebrating 25
years in business. John
Emms Commercial spe-
cialises in commercial,
industrial and retail prop-
erty. It started in Wolver-
hampton Street and moved
to its current offices in
Stone Street in 1991.

Principal John Emms
said: "Economic conditions
in 1986 were challenging
then, just as they are now.
There have been highs and
lows over the past 25 years."

He added: "We pride our-
selves on a forward looking
approach coupled with con-
sistency and maintaining
high professional stand-
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Yellow lines threat to traders in street



Angry traders and residents front, Susan Shipley, left, and Lynn Hawthorne and back from left, Katherine Hawthorne, Ian Cooper, Susan Pugh and Kulvinder Khela.

Traders say they will be forced out of business if plans for parking bans outside their Halesowen shops go ahead.

More than 600 people have signed a petition in a bid to challenge Dudley Council's proposals to install double yellow lines outside shops in Howley Grange Lane.

Around 70 roads in the town could be given full or partial parking bans as part of a scheme devised by council transport bosses.

Officials say the proposals were drawn up in response to complaints about parking in the streets and say the plans will ease congestion.

Double yellow lines would start from Howley Grange Lane at the junction with Frankley Avenue. Lines would be painted along one side of the road before extending to Spies Lane and Shenstone Valley Road.

Tough

A parking bay is proposed along the opposite side of the road.

Howley Grange Road chip shop owner Kulvinder Khela, aged 40, has helped organise the petition.

"Times are so tough to run a business at the moment and we do not need this as well," he said.

Friends Susan Shipley and Lynn Hawthorne, 51 and 47 respectively, opened their florist's shop in the street four years ago.

But now the pair say they would consider selling up unless the council goes back to the drawing board.

"We have had people coming into the shop saying that if they couldn't park directly outside they wouldn't come here and would probably go to the supermarket instead," Susan said.

Ian Cooper, aged 45, who is a member of the Halesowen Labour group, said: "Hundreds of signatures were collected within just a couple of weeks which shows the strength of feeling for people around here."

Transport bosses say there is room for revisions to the plans as they are being discussed in coming weeks.

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Sun 28th Aug	Paignton	£15.00
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Mon 29th Aug	Blackpool	£12.00
	<i>Pleasure Beach Wristbands Available for additional</i>	<i>£18.00 p/p</i>
Tues 30th Aug	Bourton On The Water inc. Moreton In Marsh Market - Return by 6pm	£10.00
Sat 3rd Sept	Blackpool Illuminations Special - 10.00pm return through lights	£14.00
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thechronicle

Apprentice star in frame

Staffordshire entrepreneur and star of this year's The Apprentice, Melody Hossaini, has described her time on the show as "the most highly pressured" period of her life.

During an event at Dudley's Merry Hill Shopping Centre, the 26-year-old businesswoman said her stint on the popular BBC show had also given her youth consultancy firm InspirEngage Ltd a valuable leg-up.

"It was an amazing experience, but it was hard as I had never worked in that kind of corporate environment before," said Iranian-born Miss Hossaini, from Great Wyrley, near Cannock.

"It was tough and it has been very up and down, but through difficult experiences we learn a lot."

Melody was at Merry Hill to promote a new Nivea "closeness" campaign.



Melody Hossaini with Ellie Daffern and Jack Hopkins

Brewery is to offer bed and breakfast

Visitors to a Black Country pub won't have to worry about the journey home any more as one of the area's most successful micro-breweries has had £40,000 plans for guest rooms approved.

The first floor flat above the Windsor Castle Inn, Stourbridge Road, Lye, which also houses the Sadler's Ales brewery, will now be revamped and turned into three bed-and-breakfast-style rooms.

Two existing bedrooms will be given en-suites, with a separate shower room and access into the hallway under the scheme costing up to £40,000.

The plans, put forward by brewery

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

owner John Sadler, were submitted to boost trade - and will create at least two jobs.

"We are very, very pleased these plans have been approved, it's great news for us and great news for our visitors," he said.

Christmas

"We are now getting quotes in and hope to start work in three or four weeks' time, getting everything up and running by Christmas."

"The aim is to get the rooms to a four or five-star standard, with high-class bathrooms, so it will take a bit of work."

Mr Sadler said the move had been in response to demand from customers who visit from all over the country and

often ask for accommodation.

"We know the demand is there as we are always being asked," he added.

Sadler's was founded in Oldbury in 1900 by Mr Sadler's grandfather, Thomas Sadler. It ceased production in 1927 but was relaunched seven years ago.

The business recently received a thumbs-up from supermarket giant Sainsbury's, shaking hands on a deal for 20,000 bottles of its Worcester Sorcerer Ale, due to hit the shelves in September.

The deal, part of a national competition, will see the ale go on sale for six weeks alongside 15 others from across the country.

If it is chosen as one of the winners of the competition, it will receive an order from Sainsbury's for a total of six months.

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thechronicle

Rugby-loving Josh on the road to recovery

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

A teenage rugby player from the Black Country struck with a potentially fatal spinal condition is on the road to recovery thanks to a new therapy. Former Windsor High School pupil Joshua Creed suffered "excruciating pain" every day and even struggled to get out of bed each morning.

He was diagnosed aged 12 with a condition called scoliosis affecting just four per cent of the population. The condition causes a severe curving of the spine and, if left untreated, can lead to fatal heart and lung problems.

But now the 16-year-old is fighting back after using an exercise based treatment instead of a painful, invasive nine-hour operation.

"Having any sort of disability is hard but when it seriously affects your life and prevents you from playing a sport you are passionate about it really is soul destroying," said Joshua, who lives in Hartsdale Close.

"I loved running around the fields playing rugby and although I would push myself to play, I would often suffer for it for a few days afterwards." Joshua was initially told that his spine was rapidly curving to the right.

The nine-hour operation is a procedure involving metal rods being inserted either side of the spine before the spine is fused solid.

The teenager, who lives with his parents Charlotte and Mark, aged 40 and 42 respectively, began searching for alternative treatments through the internet when doctors said he would be unable to continue with rugby and other contact sports if he had the operation.

They heard about a non-surgical method called ScolioGold run by Erika Maude at her clinic called Scoliosis SOS based in London and Suffolk.

Combination

Joshua spent four weeks receiving exercise-based care from the clinic. It involves a combination of physiotherapy, breathing techniques and trigger point therapy to alleviate pain. Joshua says he has made significant improvements.

"There was a point that I really did believe that I would be in pain forever," he said. "I now have the skills to control my own condition and that, for me, is priceless."

"I feel like I can get back to living life to the full, like any other normal teenager. I am looking forward to building up my fitness again and being able to play rugby again."

Project takes its toll



Artist Luke Perry with his sculpture showing a toll man vandalising the toll building in Rowley Regis

A massive art project along a four-and-a-half mile canal stretch from Sandwell to Dudley has been completed.

Luke Perry and his fiancée Natalie Gore have created 33 sculptures next to the Dudley No 2 Canal, ranging from 3ft to 6ft tall. Starting at Station Road in Old Hill and running to Blowers Green Bridge in Netherton, the £35,000 heritage trail also features 50-life-sized moorhens, which have also been sculpted out of steel.

Mr Perry, aged 27, of Wollaston, near Stourbridge, said: "It's been tough because the pieces are really varied but the whole project has been a dream to create." One of the mile marker sculptures is an image of a toll man at the toll building off Doulton Road, Rowley Regis, who has been fashioned as if he is vandalising the building, in a nod to artist Banksy. For more details visit www.dudleycanalart.com

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Abigail Cutler is hoping for West End stardom

Beauty contest is first step towards a West End dream

A teenage beauty from Rowley Regis is hoping to become a national beauty queen. Abigail Cutler from Rowley Regis has beaten hundreds of hopefuls to represent the Black Country in the Miss Teen Great Britain final in Blackpool on September 25.

Abigail, a former performing arts student at Halesowen College who lives in Harvest Road, dreams of starring on the West End stage. She said: "Before the final I am doing a lot of charity work like visiting hospitals and charity fundraisers. When we get there it will be down to personality. I want to be a positive role model, I want people to look at me and I want to inspire people."

Hospital set to employ another 100 ward staff

More than 100 new nursing staff are to be taken on by Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital over the next 12 months as part of a £2 million investment.

The workers are being brought in as part of a wider project at the hospital to make better use of beds and cut down on the number of operations that need to be cancelled during the busy winter months.

During December and January, almost 300 operations had to be put back after a surge in emergency patients due to winter illnesses leading to an extra 33 temporary emergency beds being opened.

The project will also see wards moved around on the site to help make "better use" of facilities.

Investment

Chief executive at the Dudley Group of Hospitals Trust, Paula Clark, said around 135 staff will be taken on and she added: "More than £2 million will be invested into nursing staff over the next year, increasing the number of nurses we employ."

"This investment is part of a bigger project to make better use of our beds to prevent the need to cancel patients' planned surgery during our busiest months over the winter."

"Due to changes in our demand, we are moving nine of our 25 wards in the hospital to make better use of our facilities and so patients are on the right ward for their clinical needs."

Scheme rolled out to combat cowboys

A scheme to guard against cowboy businessmen is to be launched in Dudley. The first no rogue traders zone will include more than 22,000 households in around Halesowen. The town has been picked as borough bosses say it is a hotspot for bogus callers and rogue trader activity.

The project will be rolled out over the coming weeks but it is hoped it will eventually include the Halesowen north and south areas, Hayley Green and Cradley South, Belle Vale and Cradley and Wollescote.

To report rogue traders, call the hotline on 01384 812045.



RSPCA Community fundraising manager Helen Tuite, front, with Martin Scriven, from Scriven & Co, Halesowen Golf Club's administrator Noelle Heath and rescue dog Libby who is looking for a home

Charity golf day swings in

Golfers can show off their swings and support the RSPCA at a fundraising event.

The RSPCA Birmingham Animal Centre is holding a charity tournament at Halesowen Golf Club on August 25 - and there are still some spaces left.

The cost per team of four is £200, and includes sandwich and coffee on arrival, an 18-hole round of golf and a two-course dinner to finish.

Helen Tuite, community fundraiser for the centre, said: "This is our first golf day and we are so grateful to Halesowen Golf Club for letting us hold it on their beautiful golf course."

"In addition to this, we have a lot of local companies and supporters who have entered teams so far."

People can get involved by sponsoring a hole instead, perhaps in memory of a pet - the cost is £50 for companies or £30 for individuals.

All money raised will go towards looking after abandoned and ill-treated animals cared for at the centre in Weoley Castle, like Libby the rescue dog.

Anyone interested in giving Libby a new home should call 0300 123 0754 between 11am and 3.30pm.

Council is taking action on tenants

Legal proceedings have been started against more than 30 residents in Dudley Council houses for breaking tenancy conditions, according to figures released by the authority.

They also show that 14 tenants have been thrown out of their home for such things as not paying their rent on time, not looking after their home, or harassing or causing their neighbours problems.

There are now around 23,000 council houses in Dudley and all new residents are put on an introductory tenancy agreement for a year.

Extended

While subject to the agreement they must adhere to a set of strict conditions.

It includes barring people from playing loud music, shouting and swearing, banging or slamming doors or having a dog which barks too much.

Councillor Les Jones, leader of the council, said: "The council issues introductory tenancies to new tenants for a period of 12 months."

"This can be extended for a further six months where there has been a breach of tenancy conditions."

"During 2010/11 we extended nine introductory tenancies, issued 31 notices of possession proceedings and evicted 14 tenants during their introductory tenancy."

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thechronicle

Fresh appeal over mystery of 'Flossie'

dudleychons@expressandstar.co.uk

Police have made a fresh appeal to try to solve the mystery of a 92-year-old woman's disappearance 12 years ago. There has been no trace of Florence Cole, of St John Street, Netherton, since June 7, 1999.

Mrs Cole, known locally as Flossie, had no family locally and was last seen in Simms Lane three days before, walking towards St John's Church. Police carried out searches and inquiries and also made checks in the south of England where she used to go on holiday.



Mystery - Florence Cole

They also contacted a sister from New Zealand. Mrs Cole, who lived alone and was widowed, was 80 when she went missing after she was last seen by an acquaintance.

She had been due to attend a medical appointment a couple of days later but failed to attend.

Det Sgt Corrina Griffiths, of Dudley CID, said: "We are now in the process of undertaking a review of the case. It is extremely unusual for a missing persons inquiry to go on for so many years, and even more uncommon for such an investigation to involve an elderly woman."

"We have no information to suggest that anything untoward has happened to Florence but equally we have no information to confirm she is safe and well."

Disappeared

She added: "When she disappeared, Florence did not take with her any means of support - money, clothes etc."

"We know that at the time she went missing, she was worried about a possible cataract operation, and she had lost her beloved dog."

Mrs Cole is white and was often considered to look younger than her years. She is 5ft 5in, slim and had black greying hair worn in a bun. She was last seen wearing a long black leather coat and gold coloured jewellery with an antique appearance.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Brierley Hill police station on 0345 113 5000 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

New president set



Vicky Perry is the new president of The Ladies Circle

A Stourbridge businesswoman has been named as the new national president of a women's organisation.

Vicky Perry, aged 37, from Wollaston, has just taken over the one-year post as the head of The Ladies Circle, a group for women between 18 and 45 who want to meet new friends. She

now has a specially marked car to celebrate her new role.

Miss Perry says as well as raising the profile of the organisation she also hopes to raise funds for Parkinson's UK. She has already secured £3,500 towards her £20,000 target.

"I am delighted to take on the role," said Miss Perry.

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thechronicle

High-speed chase burglars are jailed

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Two burglars who led police on a high-speed chase through the Black Country which ended in a head-on crash have been jailed.

Nicholas Hodgetts and Darren Fitzpatrick had stolen more than £10,000 of watches and laptops from a house in Dudley before the chase.

Police followed their Subaru Impreza as it reached speeds of 60mph during the afternoon in residential areas in Dudley and Oldbury. Judge Jonathan Gosling said it was "a miracle" no-one was killed.

He called it the worst case of dangerous driving he had seen without a death. Driver Hodgetts, aged 29, was jailed for four years and three months while Fitzpatrick, 26, got 26 months.

The Oldbury pair raided a house in Tansey Green Road, Dudley, after police had already tried to pull them over in Dixon's Green Road at about 12.30pm on April 20, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

They sped away from officers over a humpback bridge, before then being spotted again at about 2pm near Oldbury.

The Subaru smashed into the side of a stationary police car and mounted the pavement twice while leading the chase along Churchbridge and through the town centre.

It eventually hit an oncoming Ford Focus, said Mr Mark Preece, prosecuting. Two laptops, six watches, two cameras and a mobile phone were found in the car.

Mr Edward Barr, defending, said Hodgetts, who has a young daughter, had struggled with a drug habit but wanted to change his ways. And Fitzpatrick now wanted to "make good in society", the court heard.

Hodgetts, of Blakeley Hall Road, and Fitzpatrick, of Ashes Road, both pleaded guilty to burglary. Hodgetts also admitted two charges of dangerous driving and one of driving without insurance.

Fitzpatrick got 16 months for burglary and 10 months for breaching a 16-month suspended sentence he received in February last year for driving offences.

Appeal to find dog's owner



Kennel assistant Kate Hurley with the Jack Russell found in Wollaston

A Black Country vet is appealing for help in trying to trace the owner of a dog found wandering the streets.

Staff at AK Duncan Veterinary Surgery, Bridgnorth Road, Wollaston, say the brown and white Jack Russell cross was brought into them recently by a member of the public.

The dog had been found by the shops in Wollaston and appeared to be without an owner or with any sign of ownership.

His was microchipped but details were out of date.

Anyone who recognises the dog can contact the vets on 01384 393318.

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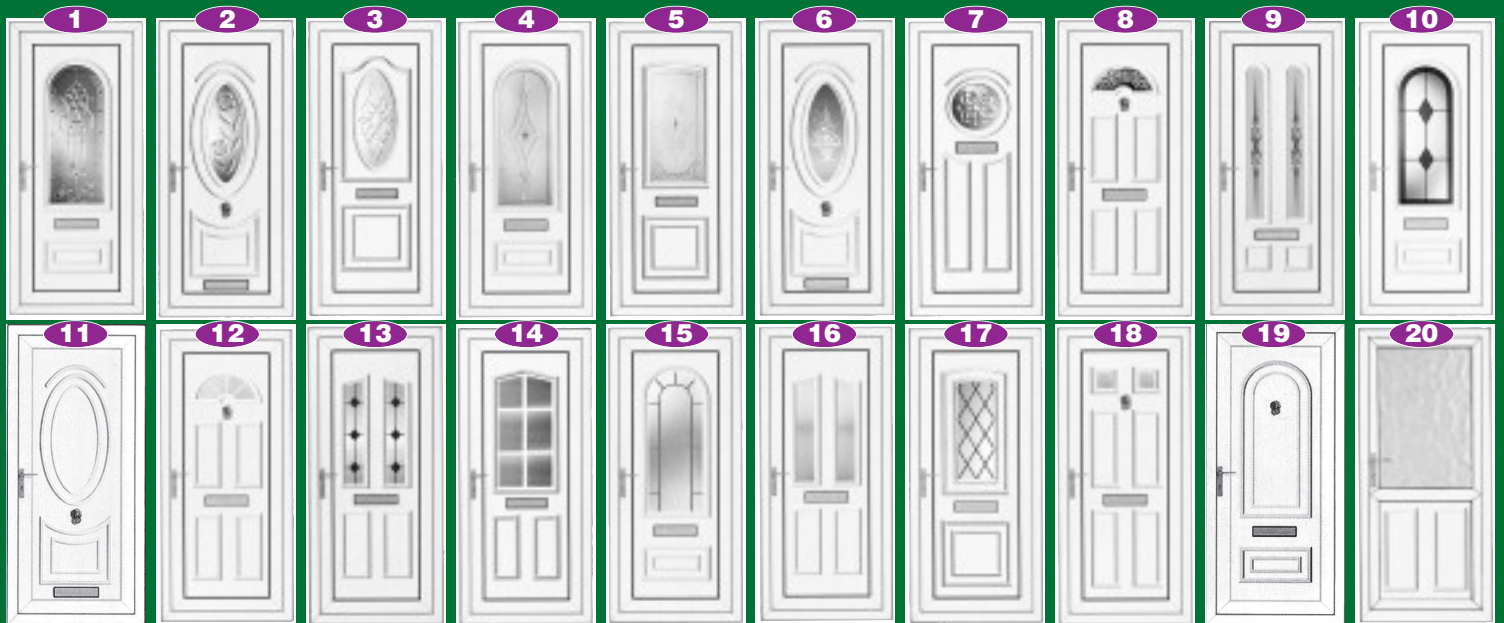
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thechronicle

Hospital parking charges rise

Patients and visitors will have to pay more to park at Dudley's three hospitals after fees were increased for the second year running.

Charges have risen by up to eight per cent, which means it now costs £5.40 to park for more than three hours - up from £5. The new prices have been introduced by Interserve, the private company which runs the car parks at Russells Hall and the Guest hospitals in Dudley and the Corbett in Stourbridge. One councillor has already attacked the rises.

Hospital bosses said they were "disappointed" that charges had been increased again since August last

year but said people would still be able to park for free for 30 minutes.

Patients receiving treatment on three or more occasions per week in the oncology and renal units would not be charged, they said.

The increases have come under fire from Dudley councillor Bryan Cotterill. He has previously campaigned for fees to be dropped.

He said he was "appalled" by the decision adding: "It just doesn't seem fair that sick people are being charged to visit hospital. It just seems immoral."

The cost of one hour's parking has gone up by 10p to £1.30. The new fee

for one to one and a half hours has also increased by 10p to £1.90.

While the cost of parking between one and a half and three hours is now £3.20 - up from £3.

Dudley Group of Hospitals chief executive Paula Clark said: "We are disappointed that Interserve has decided to increase parking charges for our patients. We recognise that our PFI partner is entitled to review parking charges annually as part of their contract and they have, in the past, managed to keep the charges down."

No-one at Interserve was available for comment.

Abbey plan protest fails to get support

Campaigners have lost their battle over a £500,000 visitor centre at the 800-year-old Halesowen Abbey after it was announced that work would start later this year.

The abbey trust was hoping to defeat the plans by getting English Heritage on its side.

But instead no objections have been put forward - so landowner Chris Tudor is aiming to begin construction in the autumn.

The plan - which was given the go-ahead by Dudley Council last November - also includes converting derelict barns into homes.

The trust had launched a last-ditch campaign by putting forward a 10-page dossier against the plans.

Members claim vital features and artefacts could be lost during the development. English Heritage has been accused of "washing its hands" by failing to support the campaign.

Lack

The trust was relying on persuading it to oppose the plans. But it said they would let "a greater number of visitors have a better appreciation" of the site.

Trust secretary Mick Freer accused English Heritage of showing a lack of interest in the abbey.

He said: "There is a picture of neglect and damage incompatible with the monument's designation and justifiable public expectations."

"That breakdown of confidence should be a matter of considerable concern to those who hold responsibility."

"The site, whilst retaining its designation as a Monument of National Importance, has been seriously and irreparably devalued both materially and in public perception."

"If Halesowen Abbey was anywhere else but Halesowen you can bet that English Heritage would be pulling out all the stops."

An English Heritage spokesman said: "The ruins of the abbey are scheduled as an ancient monument and some of the farmstead is listed."

"The barns are in a poor state of repair and it is good news that the present owner is taking an active and responsible role in maintaining and finding a new use for them."

Plan gets approval

Plans to demolish a former meeting hall in Etymore Road, Sedgley, and replace it with two houses have been given the go-ahead by Dudley Council.

Furry fun at teddy picnic



Joining the teddy bears' picnic at Huntingtree Park, Halesowen, are Taylor Poole, six, with his teddy Pooley

Families were "sure of a big surprise" when they visited a Halesowen park for a teddy bears' picnic.

Around 300 people attended the fun day organised by staff at the Tenterfields Children's Centre.

Youngsters brought their teddies along and were able to enjoy face-painting, stories and singing. There was also a magician and a balloon modeller to keep families entertained at Huntingtree Park.

Children could also enjoy summer craft activities and there were free

ice-creams for the under-fives.

Jo Smith, a family support worker at Tenterfields, said: "It was a super day. We had about 300 people turn up because the weather was so good."

"There were a lot of teddy bears and everyone had a good time."

Tenterfields Children's Centre, based at Tenterfields Primary School, offers a wide range of services for children under five and their families. Among the services on offer are stay and play sessions and a baby club.

Car accident survivor praises medical team

A former Dudley web design tutor who is recovering from multiple injuries suffered in a road accident last year has praised the hospital staff who treated him.

Duncan Buckley, aged 34, has had to undergo 19 operations after the collision involving his MG and a Mercedes van.

His injuries on April 12, 2010 on the B4379 near Heath Hill, Shifnal, included a fractured skull, three broken ribs, a broken collar bone and broken sternum.

His lungs also collapsed and he suffered bruising to his heart.

He lost eight pints of blood at the scene.

Mr Buckley, of Park View, Swynnerton, Staffordshire,



Duncan Buckley

who then worked at Computech, Dudley was flown by air ambulance to Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham.

He spent six weeks under sedation in an induced coma in critical care because his injuries were so

severe. "My miraculous survival has confounded many doctors and with the paramedic on scene only giving me a five per cent chance of avoiding fatality, even I have found it difficult to believe I came through," said Mr Buckley, who is now back at home.

"I would like to express my sincere thanks to those critical care staff that looked after me during those dark weeks."

"I also came under the care of Professor Sir Keith Porter and many armed forces surgeons whose brilliant medical knowledge saved my life."

Mr Buckley faces another two years of rehabilitation and has seven more operations to undergo.

A charity night with psychics

A night of celebrity mediumship has been organised in Dudley for a charity.

The event will be held on August 19 at the Station Hotel in the town and will feature an award-winning psychic medium Lady Snake, Oldbury-born Dave Williams who is currently filming for Channel 4, and Elizabeth Lee-Crowther, one of the UK's top pet psychics.

Tickets for the event which starts at 7pm are £6 or £12.50 with a vigil and mini ghost hunt in the hotel cellars from 10pm onwards.

All proceeds raised from the event will help raise funds for a support group for mothers affected by GBS an infection which can affect new-born babies.

There are only 25 tickets for the mini ghost hunt. Call 07967 944755.

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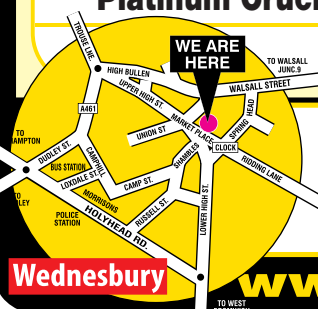
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thechronicle

Josh keen for African trip

A student has been chosen to help build an orphanage in Ghana – and is appealing for donations.

Josh Bentley, aged 21, will take part in the community project run by Birmingham City University.

He has been given a £1,500 budget for his work in the poverty-stricken village of Kwahu but wants to take over clothes and mosquito nets for the children.

Josh, of Lancaster Road, Bewdley, hopes to raise as much money as possible to help the youngsters there.

He was chosen by staff on his accountancy course who thought he was the man for the job.

On September 1 he will join other volunteers from across the globe for two weeks, before returning to study the final two years of his degree.

He said he was looking forward using his DIY skills on the project.

He added: "I'm thrilled to have been chosen – it's something I wanted to do after my course so I'm really excited."

"I just want to help them out as much as possible but I'm finding it difficult to get donations at the moment."

To donate money or equipment email Josh at josh-bobb-bentley@hotmail.co.uk



Ghana bound – Josh Bentley, aged 21

Work-to-rule protest over planned pay cut

Nursery workers claiming they face a 17.5 per cent pay cut have threatened a work-to-rule protest against a pay structure shake-up at Dudley Council.

It was revealed last month that 14 per cent, or 1,200 of the authority's 9,000 staff will be offered a

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

reduced salary under the planned single status pay shake-up.

Some 350 employees are facing a cut of 15 per cent or more and council chiefs say more than half of that group are specialists working with vulnerable, ill and disabled youngsters across

the borough. Nursery workers in special schools say they stand to lose around £3,000 from their annual pay packet of around £16,000, and labelled the move "distasteful."

Bosses at the authority say they are discussing the matter with staff and unions and the plans are yet to be agreed, but some workers are receiving full-time pay for part-time work.

"If this goes ahead, we will start at the time our contract states and leave on the dot – no extra hours of preparation or tidying," said father-of-three Neil Pardoe, who has worked at The Brier School in Kingswinford for 15 years.

"We all work far more than the 32.5 hours a week we are contracted to, and would sign a 37-hour contract, but we haven't been given that option."

"We feel demoralised, devalued and de-motivated and the school year has ended on a very difficult note."

"It seems that after a long period of working with special needs children, all the skills, knowledge and extra qualifications we have gained are not deemed worthless."

Concerns

Mr Pardoe, aged 42, of Mount Pleasant, Kingswinford, and eight other nursery nurses at the school have raised their concerns.

Under the council's planned equal pay shake-up around 47 per cent of staff would keep their basic pay and 38 per cent would see an increase.

If the proposals are agreed the new arrangements will come into effect in April 2012.

The changes aims to introduce a equal pay for people performing different jobs at a similar level.

Charity walk is just the ticket

A dozen bus drivers walked the streets of the Black Country to raise money for a hospital.

The colleagues, joined by family and friends, traced the eight-mile 246 bus route from Dudley bus station to Stourbridge town centre to help raise money for the children's unit at Russells Hall Hospital.

It was organised by driver Dave Gerrard, aged 67, who is based at Pensnett depot, and he persuaded his colleagues to get involved. "It was tough going but we all enjoyed it," he said. "It was worth the sore feet for the money we have managed to raise," said Mr Gerrard, who lives in Amblecote and drives on a number of routes around Dudley.

They managed to complete the walk in just over two hours, and it is hoped they will raise just over £1,000. The money raised will help pay for overnight beds needed for parents to stay with their children when they are poorly.



Dave Gerrard and Scott Bobberley with other bus drivers embarking on the eight-mile trek from Dudley to Stourbridge

Fun and games at museum

Visitors to the Black Country Living Museum can find out what men, women and children did in their spare time 100 years ago this month.

A programme of craft activities will run at the venue throughout August which will include a family trail where people will be challenged to discover letters around the site to find out about Black Country life and leisure during 1850 and 1950. Families can also learn how to entertain themselves in the way that children of the 1930s would have done.

Mel Weatherley, head of learning said: "We chose the do-it-yourself leisure theme this summer to bring to life not only the hardship but the team spirit and creativity of the families that once lived and worked in the Black Country."

"We are hoping that the hands-on toy making workshops, family trail, heavy metal workshop demonstrations, street theatre and costumed guides will all inspire our visitors with the same creativity and can do."

Witness appeal after jobs flood nature site

An appeal for witnesses has been launched after a Dudley beauty spot was flooded in an act of "mindless vandalism". A pool at Fens Pool Nature Reserve in Pensnett was flooded after a dam was opened by jobs on Thursday night last week. Dudley Police and the council are now asking anyone with information on the attack to come forward.

Workers spent most of Friday clearing up the area and fixing a broken valve on the dam.

The Shed Shop in nearby Pensnett Road was flooded with piles of timber stock damaged.

Councillor David Stanley, Dudley Council cabinet member for environment and culture said: "The problem of flooding is caused by mindless vandalism to valves on the pools."

Urge

The responsibility of the pools is with British Waterways and they are on site now to carry out repair works and to look at a long-term solution to the problem.

"This is a serious issue and not only cause flooding to one nearby business but it can also have a seriously adverse affect on wildlife, including numerous fish species." Dean Davies British Waterways general manager said: "I am extremely disappointed that the actions of a few have caused such a major problem."

"I would urge anyone who does have any information to contact customer services on 01827 252000 or the local Police on 0845 1135000."

Students can dish up film on catering skills

Catering students at Halesowen College have put their cooking and presenting skills to the test to complete a 'Saturday kitchen'-style programme.

They used local seasonal produce for the promotional film. The media and catering departments came together to produce a programme where students were filmed creating two dishes.

The film will be used to help promote catering courses at the college following the opening of two new £400,000 kitchens.

Chris Hughes, catering lecturer, said: "It has been a very positive experience for both the catering and media students to participate in."

Stuart McConnell, senior teacher, said: "The media students found the project challenging but they were all extremely professional and the finished film looked great."

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- Included excursions:**
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 - Bridlington & Beverley

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- Included excursions:**
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 - Lincoln

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Jersey boasts miles of soft sandy beaches and secluded coves. The Norfolk Lodge Hotel has an indoor pool and is set in one of St. Helier's best residential areas.

5 Days • 4 Nights:
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Sparkling seas, golden sands, rugged cliffs, picturesque harbours and fascinating countryside await the visitor to Guernsey. L'Eree Bay Hotel is set approximately 50 yards from a beautiful sandy beach

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Isle of Wight • Shanklin

Shanklin boasts a long sandy beach which lies at the foot of spectacular cliffs. We stay at the Langham Court Hotel. This is set minutes from the sea front.

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- Included excursions:**
- Brighton • Hastings & Rye

5 Days • 4 Nights:
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Glastonbury Hotel - located on Royal Parade:
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5 Days • 4 Nights:
05 September & 24 October from £199.95



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Special Offer: Book both excursions for just £30pp

5 Days • 4 Nights: 05 Sept & 10 October from £199.95



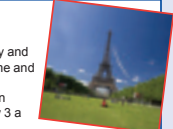
Paris Weekend with visit to Versailles

See the world's most enchanting city and discover the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame and Arc de Triomphe. On day 2 an optional Paris excursion taking in the main sights and on day 3 a visit to Versailles.

3 Days • 2 Nights:
16 September, 21 October from £129.95, 11 November from £99.95

- 4 Days • 3 Nights - with included excursions:**
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 - Paris by night and Montparnasse Tower
 - Versailles (admission to Chateau extra)

09 September & 14 October from £169.95



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3 Days • 2 Nights: 07 October from £99.95



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On day 3 we travel through Tuscany to the Sorrento Peninsular area and stay for 5 nights at a 3* hotel on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

On day 4 you can join our optional visit to Capri, with included guided tour by mini bus - £59.95 pp

On day 5 we have included a tour along the Amalfi Coast - one of the most spectacular coastlines in Europe. We take in Amalfi and Ravello.

On day 6 you can join our optional visit to Pompeii and Vesuvius - £39.95 per person

On day 7 you can join our optional visit to the city of Naples. The city has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. See the narrow streets, mysterious churches, catacombs and caves - £19.95 per person.

10 Days • 9 Nights: 30 September from £399.95



Ostend's Golden Coast

The bright seaside resort of Ostend is famous for its long stretch of golden beach, vibrant night life, colourful bars and cafes and sea food restaurants. We stay at the Hotel New Astoria. This is well located within walking distance of the centre and beach.

- Included excursions:**
- Dutch border town of Sluis & Bruges
 - Amsterdam

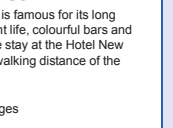
5 Days • 4 Nights: 22 August from £199.95

Ostend Free Bar Breaks

Free Bar from 20.30 hrs until midnight

- Optional excursions:**
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 - Amsterdam - £19.95 per person

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4 Days • 3 Nights - 05 & 13 December from £99.95

Bruges, Ostend & Valkenburg Christmas Markets

3 Days • 2 Nights - 09 December from £139.95

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Brussels & Bruges Christmas Markets

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Antwerp & Ghent Christmas Markets

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Disney's Hotel Santa Fe
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Mickey's Magical Fireworks & Bonfire

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Shamed post staff who raided the mail

They were entrusted with the delivery of Her Majesty's mail – but instead hoarded thousands of Christmas gifts, birthday cards and cheques bound for expectant homes throughout the Midlands.

Stupidity, curiosity, incompetence and greed were blamed for their indiscretions when the eight postal workers convicted of breaching the trust of employers and customers appeared in court this year.

Just one was jailed for their deception, along with an immigrant who secured a job as a postman despite a lengthy criminal record for dishonesty – and went on to steal while off-duty.

Peter Webb plundered jewellery, mobile phones, DVDs and greetings cards from mail meant for residents in Lichfield over four years. The 55-year-old was finally snared when Post Office investigators planted test packages on his round.

When one, containing a digital camera, was not delivered, Webb's home in Leyfields was searched and packets dating back to 2006 were discovered. Last week Judge Mark Eades jailed Webb for eight months, telling him he had "breached the contract the Post Office has with the public that a package will be delivered."

Damaged

Webb told his employers he had "been an idiot", while his lawyer Mr Rashad Moham-med said he had acted out of "curiosity".

The same excuse was offered by the counsel of Bilston postman Benjamin Bryan. He was told he had damaged trust in the Royal Mail after he was convicted of hiding more than 9,000 items of mail and opened packages containing electrical items.

Bryan was caught after bosses placed a tracking device inside a test package he was due to deliver which



David Spiers – dumped letters near Dudley Zoo and was given a suspended six-month jail sentence

they traced back to the 23-year-old's home in Addenbroke Street, Darlaston. Police recovered a Sony Walkman and touch tablet computer worth hundreds of pounds following searches of Bryan's home and car. But Judge John Wait opted to suspend Bryan's six-month prison sentence for 18 months.

Deon McFarlane was fined £600 after being spotted opening a letter during one of his rounds. Investigators later discovered undelivered mail in his kitchen drawer.

The 33-year-old, of Junction Road, Stow Heath, denied theft and delaying postal packets but was found guilty by magistrates following a trial last month.

Both Shaun Maley and Hannah Moore-Kelly worked for the Royal Mail for a matter of weeks before bosses' suspicions were aroused. Maley, 21, was rumoured two months after starting in February while Moore-Kelly, also 21, lasted just six weeks.

The pair hoarded thousands of items, recovered from Maley's car and Moore-Kelly's home, Maley of Fuchsia Drive, Pendeford, but who worked in

Halesowen, was struggling to keep up with his deliveries, the court heard. And Bilston-based postwoman Moore-Kelly, of Wells Road, Penn, was "out of her depth", her lawyer claimed.

Maley faces sentence later this month while Moore-Kelly was ordered to carry out 80 hours of unpaid work for her hoarding.

Dudley postman David Spiers didn't even bother taking some of his undelivered post home – instead he dumped thousands of letters near Dudley Zoo.

The 31-year-old, of Park Moor Gardens, Dudley, was given a six-month sentence, suspended for two years, for dumping 6,385 letters and keeping another 4,654 items at his home.

Glen Miller was a trusted veteran of 23 years' service. But the 44-year-old, of Scafell Way, West Bromwich, succumbed to temptation, stealing £40 after opening 18 packages.

Plundering

Miller, said to be suffering financial difficulties due to the break-up of his marriage, received a four-month prison term suspended for two years at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Marc Lawson was given the same sentence after plundering cash and gifts sent to Stafford delivery office. The 33-year-old, of Blythe Road, Stafford, stole hundreds of gift cards as well as DVDs and packages.

District Judge Wilkinson had some strong words for the Royal Mail after the case of Zydrunas Ksonas. He was taken on despite having 26 previous convictions for dishonesty.

Ksonas, aged 44, of Leicester Street, Whitmore Reans, was jailed for eight weeks for two cases of theft. The judge said: "A person as dishonest as Mr Ksonas should not be working with Royal Mail when there is an ongoing problem of things going missing."

Ruth Barnes, spokeswoman for Royal Mail which employs 163,000 people nationwide, said bosses had a "zero tolerance approach to dishonesty."

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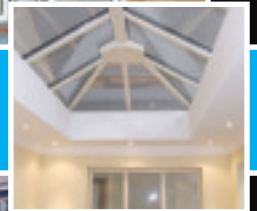
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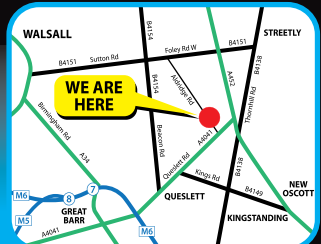
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Saturday 10th September BLACKPOOL 8.00 pm return	\$18.00	\$16.00	\$13.00
Sunday 11th September LLANDUDNO via LLANGOLLEN - Horse Shoe Pass	\$20.00	\$18.00	\$15.00
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Sunday 25th September MYSTERY EVENING TOUR	\$12.00	\$11.00	\$8.00
Saturday 1st October BLACKPOOL 8.00 pm return	\$18.00	\$16.00	\$13.00
Saturday 8th October WELLSBOURNE MARKET & STRATFORD	\$16.00	\$15.00	\$12.00
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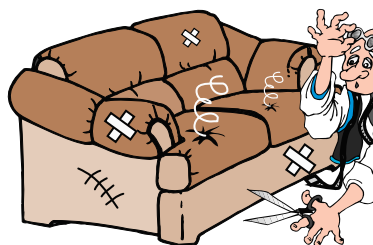
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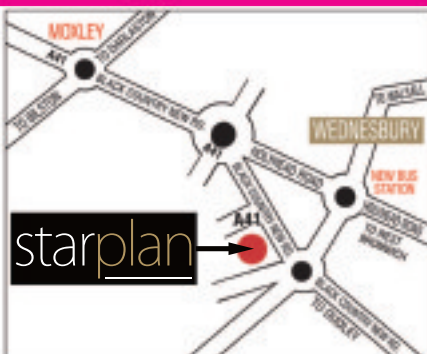
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Adventure Island 1: The Mystery of the Whistling Caves

– Helen Moss (Orion Children's Books, paperback, £4.99)

THE spirit of Enid Blyton's The Famous Five and The Secret Seven lives on in this, the first of a new series of adventures featuring Scott, Jack, Emily and her dog Drift.

A summer trip to Cornwall's Whistling Caves poses the question why has the cavern fallen silent. The old legend that such an occurrence will place the nearby castle in peril seems to come true when a priceless ancient shield is stolen from the museum.

But don't worry, our young investigators are on the case, and they soon will be again in The Mystery of the Midnight Ghost.

It's great to have this Worcestershire-raised author creating a new bunch of pesky kids to stop wrong-doers in their tracks, and they are more savvy than Blyton's young heroes. After all, they live in the age of pop music, computer games, celebrities and theme parks. But, not so deep down, they are still made of the same old good stuff. Spiffing, ahem, I mean, wicked.

The Smurfs: Movie Novelization – Stacia Deutsch and Rhody Cohon (Simon and Schuster, paperback, £4.99)

The Smurfs are back in a big way. The popular little blue and white elf-like creatures were created by Belgian cartoonist Peyo and called by French-speakers, Les Schtroumpfs, in the 1950s. But the British and Americans opted for their easier-on-the-tongue Dutch name, The Smurfs.

Parents may remember them fondly from their first wave of animated TV success in the 1980s but now they are getting the blockbuster Hollywood treatment in a new computer-animated movie on which this book is based, telling how an evil wizard sends the Smurfs to modern day New York (has anyone seen Enchanted?). With Smurf Village proving a very popular game app, it looks like blue is the colour again and loads more Smurfchandise is on the way.

Moshi Monsters: Buster's Lost Moshlings

– A Search-and-Find Book (Sunbird, paperback, £6.99)

The Smurfs have got new rivals, virtual pets from a website called Moshi Monsters. The online world of colourful creatures, created by London-based Mind Candy, is massively popular with the primary school age group. Moshi mania, a blend of gaming and social networking, looks set to surpass Club Penguin and could even challenge the Disney empire in children's affections.

The Moshlings Collector's Guide proved a hit and now comes Lost Moshlings, which blends the world of Moshi Monsters with the Where's Wally concept of trying to find them from a cast of thousands on various large scale pictures. This could keep Moshi devotees quiet and busy for long periods, so may be perfect for that long holiday drive?

Holiday reading for the pre-teens

The Wimpy Kid Do-It-Yourself Book – Jeff Kinney (Puffin, paperback, £6.99)

The Diary of a Wimpy Kid became a massive hit, leading to a movie and many more books about Kinney's unlucky character Greg. But this book purporting to be your own DIY book has, alongside cartoons, illustrations and some quizzes, lots of blank or lined pages where children can create their own cartoon or story. Hmm. However popular the character, I can't help thinking youngsters will be a little disappointed. It's great to encourage creativity but parents could buy a notebook or sketch pad for a fraction of the price to do that. Kinney doesn't have to leave massive gaps in his book and then charge the same price as for a proper novel.

Ravenwood – Andrew Peters (Chicken House, paperback, £6.99)

Shropshire author Peters has created a wonderful new tree-top world with the forest island of Arborium, a well-imagined mile high tree-house kingdom, and a likeable character in young plumber's mate Ark. When he overhears a plot to rob his homeland of wood to supply resources for the steel and glass superpower Maw (yup, it's a green eco-parable), Ark finds himself plunged into the dark roots of Ravenwood on a desperate mission to save his woodland home and people. Peters should carve himself a niche in the children's fantasy genre with this cracking yet quite chunky adventure of nearly 400 pages.

The Emerald Atlas – John Stephens (Doubleday, hardback, £12.99)

Three siblings find out the magic is real, old books can cause lots of trouble and only they can save the world in this fantasy epic which weaves together elements akin to Pullman's His Dark Materials books, Lemmon Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events and JK Rowling's saga about a certain boy wizard. This isn't quite in that league but an enjoyable read none the less.

The Dragon Whisperer – Lucinda Hare (Corgi, paperback, £5.99)

Dragons are in (have they ever been out?), thanks to the final Potter epic, TV's Merlin and a recent animated movie. This is a soaring debut with the hero aiming to ride a dragon into battle against the hobgoblins. This is a solid fantasy in the classic tradition, and a good way to pave the way for The Hobbit.

Mio's Kingdom – Astrid Lindgren (Oxford University Press, paperback, £6.99)

Originally published in Swedish in 1954 by the author most famous for Pippi Longstocking. This story about a sad boy who escapes into a Narnia-like fantasy world is quite poignant. It is old fashioned but does have a dreamy quality.

The Day of the Monster Pigeons; The Day of the Camera Carnage – Steve Cole (Oxford University Press, paperbacks, £5.99)

Both part of the Freekham High School series, here are more weirdly amusing goings-on at a school that really would keep Ofsted busy. Fun for those ready to move on from, or supplement, their Horrid Henry reading.



Timeless classics still captivate

The Secret Garden – Frances Hodgson Burnett (Oxford World's Classics, paperback, £8.99)

This year is the centenary of this children's classic, which has been dubbed fairly accurately as "the children's Jane Eyre". The story about a spoiled girl who, after her unloving parents die in a cholera outbreak, is sent from colonial India to her uncle's gloomy mansion on the bleak Yorkshire moors has lots of Gothic flavours, especially the spooky sobbing in the night that alerts her that all is not as it seems.

Yet, despite several characters being affected by the loss of loved ones, this turns into quite an upbeat novel with its modern views on health, nature, empire, childhood and gender. It remains a rewarding read.

Treasure Island – Robert Louis Stevenson (Oxford World's Classics, paperback, £5.99)

Forget Pirates of the Caribbean, this is the definitive rip-roaring pirate tale. The story of young Jim Hawkins, who falls under the influence of the charismatic but dangerous Long John Silver, and the hunt for buried treasure is still gripping.

All the ingredients are here for a thrilling read – greed, murder, treachery. Written in 1883, it remains one of the all-time great adventures.

Ballet Shoes – Noel Streatfeild (Puffin, paperback, £6.99)

A classic celebrates its 75th anniversary with an endorsement from Jacqueline Wilson as one her all-time favourites. An age of house maids and exiles from the Russian Revolution may seem remote but this tale of three ambitious adopted siblings who pursue their stage-struck ambitions despite family money troubles can still captivate.

Tales of Ancient Egypt – Roger Lancelyn Green (Puffin Classics, paperback, £6.99)

Rick Riordan's children's novels featuring gods and monsters from Greek, Roman and Egyptian mythologies has made many youngsters interested in the legends of the ancient world. First published in the late 1960s, Green introduced many children to the great myths and can fascinate a new generation. His Egyptian tales include the creation myth of Amen-Ra, Isis searching the waters for her dead husband Osiris, the Bennu Bird and Book of Thoth, even the original version of Cinderella!

Leon Burakowski

OMG! It's text for the tweens

**Buttercup Mash – Joanna Nadin (Oxford University Press, paperback, £6.99)**

OMG. MY artist mother has gate-crashed my 14th birthday party with a homeless man called Fergal. And, like, my best friend Imogen, a complete drama queen, is refusing to speak to me because it is so totally unfair that all she got was Colin the Clown when she was seven and he wasn't half as drunk.

Enter the world of Buttercup Jones, precocious early teen who delivers a running commentary on her life via a diary which reads like an online blog. In fact, it is, for her online analyst. She has issues and they take a turn for the worse when she joins the school glee club with the potential for terminal embarrassment singing rock ballads like a demented karaoke addict.

It's funny and the English author Joanna Nadin has had other successful books for tweens (the 11 to 14 set) that have seen her shortlisted for the apparently coveted title "Queen of Teen". But some of the references sound rather unconvincing. I mean would Buttercup really know who Duke Ellington is when many kids her age don't know who Mick Jagger and David Bowie are?

Cherry Crush – Cathy Cassidy (Puffin, paperback, £6.99)

The first in the Chocolate Box Girls series now out in paperback. Cassidy has a big following enhanced by the stories of sassy girls. Trouble is brewing when new girl in town Cherry falls for dishy Shay Fletcher, only to find out the object of her desire is her new stepister Honey's boyfriend. Ouch.



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Stourport Boat Club make their way to the water ready to take part in the Regatta at Stourport-on-Severn



Crowds enjoy the sunshine while watching the action on the water

It's oarsome as visitors flock to see the regatta



Assistance after a suspected heart attack



A crew out on the water at the regatta

HUNDREDS of people lined the banks of the River Severn as rowers took to the water for the annual Stourport regatta.

The two-day event at the weekend brought more than 1,200 competitors to the Wyre Forest from across the country.

People took up positions overlooking the river on the town's bridge and on both river banks to get the best vantage point to see the action.

Rowers aged from 11 to 80 took part in a series of races in different categories in front of Stourport Boat Club's Boathouse. One rowing boat capsized prior to a race, throwing two girls from Trentham Boat Club into the river. They were brought back

to the shore in a rescue boat, shocked but unhurt.

Club captain Andy Morris said the event had been the perfect opportunity for people to see an Olympic sport at close quarters.

"I don't think there is a better way for people to get to see a sport which will feature heavily for this country at London 2012," he said.

Disco

"It is a long competition spread over both days. The number of entries is about on par with what we have seen in previous years. "It is a good day for all the family because even though we can be racing from 9am to 6pm we have people camp overnight and there is a disco on the Saturday night at the clubhouse."



Two girls from Trentham Boat Club are rescued after they capsized

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It's rumoured injured Jessie J will perform from a chair



Tom, Nathan, Siva, Max and Jay of The Wanted who are playing at the V Festival at Weston Park this weekend

Stars set to shine on festival stage

SELL-out extravaganza V Festival is bursting with chart topping acts as the annual event touches down in Weston Park this weekend.

More than 80 artists are lined up to perform on only four stages in just 48 hours at what promises to be the biggest and best event yet.

Top of the V bill are rap superstar Eminem and The Arctic Monkeys. The acts couldn't be more different, and while Eminem kicks off the first of a host of UK concerts, The Arctic's guarantee to dish up a huge slice of indie vibes for rockers on day two.

Headlining the second bill is two more of the industry's biggest names, Rihanna and Plan B.

As the Barbadian R n' B artist, who famously collaborated with Eminem, prepares for her first gig in Weston Park, Plan B is back for the second time following last year's knock out set.

Also gracing the Virgin Media stage is The Script, Manic Street Preachers, Scouting for Girls, Ellie Goulding, The Kaiser Chiefs, Lost Prophets and Bruno Mars, to name just a few.



American rapper Eminem headlines the proceedings on Saturday night

That's before you even get to the 4 Music stage, the arena stage or the undercover tent.

The star-studded weekend, which first came to Staffordshire back in 1999, has more sponsors than ever before providing a host of other attractions for the thousands of festival goers to lap up. Campers can enter the site from 8am on Friday and day ticket holders from 12pm on Saturday and Sunday.

For more information about times, travel and what to do on arrival visit www.vfestival.com



R n' B singer Rihanna makes an appearance on Saturday



Arctic Monkeys will be last to play on Sunday evening



X Factor star Olly Murs will entertain festival crowds

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Friday

BBC1 9.00 *Bratford*, 9.15 *Hair Hunter*, 9.30 *How Many Wives Under the Hammer?*, 9.50 *News*, 10.00 *What's Hot?*, 10.15 *French?*, 10.30 *Cauls in the Attic*, 10.45 *BBC News*, 10.55 *Bergin Hunt*, 11.00 *BBC News*, 11.15 *Weather*, 11.30 *Regional News*, 11.45 *Weather*, 11.55 *15*, 12.05 *Countryfile*, 12.15 *News*, 12.30 *Weather*, 12.45 *Regional News*, 1.00 *50800*, 1.15 *Pointless*, 1.30 *BBC News*, 1.45 *News*, 1.55 *Regional News*, 2.00 *News*, 2.15 *Weather*, 2.30 *Fake Britain*, 2.45 *BBC News*, 2.55 *Regional News*, 3.00 *Entertainment*, 3.20 *A Question of Sport*, 3.30 *10.0*, 3.45 *Family 5000*, 3.55 *News*, 4.00 *BBC News*, 4.15 *News*, 4.30 *Britain*, 4.45 *My Favorite Joke*, 4.55 *The National Lottery Friday Night Draw*, 5.05 *10.0*, 5.15 *News*, 5.30 *Regional News*, 5.45 *Weather*, 5.55 *Regional News*, 6.00 *News*, 6.15 *Regional News*, 6.30 *Weather*, 6.45 *News*, 6.55 *Regional News*, 7.00 *News*, 7.15 *Weather*, 7.30 *News*, 7.45 *Regional News*, 7.55 *News*, 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The White Tower, (19.00) 1.15 *Dingdong*, *March*
2000, *Wanted*, *Down Under*, *Revisited*, 3.00
What's Hot, 3.30 *Flamingo*, *Flamingo*, *Flamingo*,
4.00 *Britain's Got Talent*, 5.00 *Britain's Got*
Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is, (6.00)
Egyptians, *6.30* *Egyptians*, *Celebrity*, *Special*
2000, *South African*, *Walla*, *7.20* *The*
Family and Me, *8.30* *Gardener's*, *World*, 9.00
South African, *Walla*, *10.00* *The*
Show, 10.30 *Newsnight*, 11.00 *The*
at the Edinburgh Festival, *Winter*, 12.00 *First*
and Education, (2.00) 1.00 *First*, *First*, (1.00)

ITV 6.00 *Dumbbells*; 6.30 *Lorraine*; 6.25 *TV*
Jeanny *Let's Show* (R) 10.30 *The*
Morning 12.30 *Let's Do Lunch* with *Gino* & *Mae*
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Weather 2.00 6.00 *Minute* *McKiver* (R) 3.00
Dickinson's Real Deal (R) 3.50 *Generation* 3.00
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The Zone *TV* *McKideron* *Handlines* 3.00 *TV*
Columbo *Presenting* *Murder* (1988) 5.20 *TV*

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Channel 5 6:00 *Midnight* 6:15 *TV*
 7:00 *Weight Watchers* 7:30 *TV*
 7:55 *Night Shift* Enter with *Quincy* Logans 8:30 *TV*
 9:00 *News Luncshn* 12:15 *Celebrity Big Brother* 1:30 *TV*
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£725 PCM



HALESOWEN, HUNTLANDS ROAD

Located on the Huntlands Estate, is this three story terraced property, close to Halesowen town centre, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Double Glazing, Warm Air Heating, Family Bathroom, Front and Rear Gardens, Driveway Parking

£695 PCM



HALESOWEN, WROXLEY HOUSE, UFFMOOR LANE

Luxury Living In Hayley Green A superb, brand new luxury apartment on the first floor. Offering spacious accommodation including, Open Plan Lounge/Kitchen and Dining with French Doors to Balcony, Two Double Bedrooms, Master with En-Suite, Further Well Appointed Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing and Allocated Parking.

£625 PCM



HALESOWEN, QUEEN STREET

Situated within walking distance to Halesowen town centre is this large end terrace home, comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Large Lounge, Large Fitted Kitchen, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating Downstairs, Bathroom with Shower, Driveway Parking, Unfurnished

£595 PCM



ROWLEY REGIS, ALWIN ROAD

This detached house in a cul-de-sac location, and close to local shops and transport links, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room, Dining Area, Fitted Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Rear Garden, Driveway Parking, Unfurnished

£595 PCM



STOURBRIDGE, THE PUMHOUSE

This luxury modern furnished first floor apartment briefly comprises of: One Double Bedroom, Stunning Open Plan Lounge, High Spec Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom with Shower, Electric Storage Heating, Parking Space.

£575 PCM



HALESOWEN, WILTSHIRE DRIVE

Located on the Horner Hill Estate, is this well present semi-detached home, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms with Fitted Wardrobes, Spacious Lounge, Dining Room, Family Bathroom with Shower, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front and Rear Gardens, Driveway Parking, Unfurnished

£575 PCM



QUINTON, LAPAL MANOR COURT

This beautifully Unfurnished third floor apartment, close to local motorway access, briefly comprises of: Gas Central Heating, Large Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Secure Allocated Parking behind Electric Gates, Contemporary style

£550 PCM



HALESOWEN, GREEN LANE

Located within walking distance from Blackheath town centre and minutes away from J2 is this lovely mid-terrace house, comprising of: Three Good Sized Bedrooms, Two Reception Rooms, Newly Fitted Kitchen, Downstairs WC Bathroom with Shower, WC, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, On Road Parking, Unfurnished

£540 PCM



HALESOWEN, BLOOMFIELD STREET NORTH

An extremely well presented two bedroomed end terrace house being situated within easy access to Halesowen town, briefly comprising of: Lounge with Feature Fireplace, Kitchen/Diner Large Conservatory, Two Bedrooms, First Floor Family Bathroom, Charming Rear Garden, Gas Central Heating and Partial Double Glazing, On Road Parking, Internal Inspection is Highly Recommended. Unfurnished

£525 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, SUTHERLAND ROAD

An unfurnished semi detached house, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen with White Goods, Downstairs WC, Two Bedrooms, House Bathroom with Shower, Rear Garden, Driveway Parking

£495 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, ELBOW STREET

A lovely unfurnished second floor flat, close to local shops and transport links, briefly comprising of: Electric Storage Heating, Spacious Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Allocated Parking

£475 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, PEAR TREE LANE

This lovely unfurnished modern ground floor apartment, located in a popular area, close to local train station and buses, comprises of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms with Fitted Wardrobes, Bathroom with Shower, Rear Garden, Parking Space

£475 PCM



NETHERTON, ROUND STREET

Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi-detached home, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Rear Garden and Driveway Parking for 2 Cars, Unfurnished

£475 PCM



ROWLEY REGIS, ELY CLOSE

This ground floor apartment, minutes away from the local motorway access, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen, Lounge, Bathroom with Shower, Allocated Parking Space.

£425 PCM



HALESOWEN, STOURBRIDGE ROAD

A 2 bed unfurnished flat above a shop and within walking distance of town centre comprising of living room, dining kitchen, 2 bedrooms, shower room, gas central heating, double glazing, parking space and rear garden.

£395 PCM



NETHERTON, ST GEORGES ROAD

This lovely unfurnished first floor flat, situated in a quiet area, comprises of: Electric Storage Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Bathroom with Shower, Rear Garden, Parking space

£395 PCM



HALESOWEN, STOURBRIDGE ROAD

This well presented furnished apartment convenient for all local amenities and transport links, briefly comprises of: Modern Fitted Kitchen, Large Double Bedroom, Parking Space, Internal Inspection Recommended

£395 PCM



QUINTON, NAYLORS CLOSE

Situated in a very quiet cul-de-sac, and close to the M5, this unfurnished ground floor apartment comprises of: Electric Storage Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Bathroom with Shower, Parking Space

£395 PCM



HALESOWEN, NETHEREND LANE

On this popular development, is this unfurnished ground floor flat, briefly comprising of: Electric Storage Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Bathroom with Shower, Communal Garden, Garage

£380 PCM

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Midcalf Nicholls is marketing an apartment within this former school house, in Stourbridge. The property, available for offers based on £145,000, has two bedrooms and original features

School's out at ground floor flat

THIS ground floor apartment is within the Old School House, and forms part of a superb conversion.

The accommodation retains a wealth of original features and has a real "wow factor" – and comes with a price guide of £145,000.

The property at New Road, Stourbridge, benefits from zones,

under-floor heating, wooden floors, double glazing, pressurised hot water system, kitchen with granite work surfaces and integrated appliances and luxury sanitary ware to both bath and shower rooms.

Space

Accommodation comprises communal entrance accessible via an intercom, entrance door into open plan living space with well-defined sitting and kitchen areas,

bedroom one with en suite bathroom, bedroom two and luxury shower room.

There is allocated parking to the rear of the property which offers secure ease-of-living in a convenient location, just a stone's throw from town centre amenities and public transport links.

For further details, or to arrange a viewing, contact the agent, Midcalf Nicholls, on 01384 443434.

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TO LET

Apperley Way, Halesowen
£400

A well presented 1 Bedroom ground floor flat in a sort after area of Halesowen. The property comprises of lounge, kitchen, double bedroom and bathroom with shower. Communal gardens and driveway. The property is located near local bus routes and within walking distance to cradley road train station

NEW

Valley Close, Callow Hill, Redditch
£269,950

A well presented detached bungalow, on a corner plot backing on to woodland. Offering 3 bedrooms, reception hall, cloakroom, WC, Kitchen, Useful storage room, Lounge/Diner, 3 bedrooms, Ensuite bathroom with shower. Front and rear gardens, Driveway and Detached double garage.

TO LET

Apperley Way, Halesowen
£400

A 2 Bedroom Flat in a sort after location. The property comprises of: 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, lounge, kitchen and communal gardens. Close to local amenities, Bus routes and within walking distance to Cradley Railway Station.

TO LET

Brook Lane, Oldhill
£495

A large 2 bedroom apartment comprising of: off road parking, double glazed windows. It is in a popular area, close to local amenities.

TO LET

Green Lane, Halesowen
£525

A spacious end of terrace two bedroom house. Benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing. Offering: lounge diner, Refitted kitchen with patio doors to garden, family bathroom, two bedrooms and rear garden with patio area and parking space. Close to local amenities.

LET

Balds Lane, Lye
£475

A well presented two bedroom property, Benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing. The property briefly comprises of entrance hall, Kitchen, Living room, 2 bedrooms and bathroom with shower. The property has a large drive way and Viewing Essential



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The house is well-presented, with some nice touches such as this fireplace

Three-bed home on market at £192,500

THIS traditional, three-bedroomed, terraced house, is on the market in Bearwood for £192,500.

Estate agent Derek Spire says in its marketing details: "This is a truly immaculate and beautifully improved freehold terraced villa offering

above-average size accommodation which is gas centrally heated, double glazed and fully alarmed."

The property in Sherwood Road includes three double bedrooms, expensively refitted bathroom with bath and individual shower, hall, dining room, well-proportioned lounge, under stairs cloak area, superb 19ft fitted kitchen

and a downstairs WC/washroom.

Outside there is a delightful enclosed garden and the house benefits from being located in an exceptionally convenient situation just off the main Bearwood Road with comprehensive day-to-day amenities close at hand.

Call 0121 420 4646 for more details.

Use DIY skills to protect your home

YOU can protect your home yourself, providing you have basic DIY skills.

Homebase has come up with a guide that shows you how to help keep your home safe and secure by fitting an alarm, security lighting, CCTV and strong locks for your external doors.

None of the tasks are particularly difficult but some electrical and carpentry skills are required at times. Remember, always use the manufacturer's instructions when fitting any new security equipment.

1. Alarms

Before buying an alarm you need to work out what features are necessary for your home. Systems are either wired or wireless. Wired ones can be a bit tricky to install as you will need to run wires from each detector all the way back to the central control unit.

Both types usually use a number of detectors that either sense movement or are triggered by breaking a magnetic contact i.e. when someone opens a door/window.

Break-contact detectors protect the vulnerable entry points such as the back and front doors and ground floor windows. Work out how many you will need.

PIR sensors are triggered by body heat and movement. They are good for covering large areas inside your home but not usually suitable for entry points as they may be set off by people or animals passing by.

Place sensors so the beam does not point at a window or heat sources these will set them off. Check the sensors cover a sufficient area for the room you want to protect. Most control boxes need a mains power supply, with a back-up battery in case of power failure. Make sure the box is tamper proof so the alarm goes off if an intruder tries to interfere with it. Make sure the keypad is out of reach of small children.

The alarm box should be fitted to the front of the home or somewhere that is obvious to passers-by. It should be placed high up so that it can't be tampered with. If your home can also be reached from the rear, make sure



Make sure you point lights so that passers-by do not trigger them off

you order a second alarm box.

2. CCTV (closed circuit TV)

For extra reassurance CCTV systems are easy to fit and do not need any special electrical connections. The simpler systems include one or two cameras and a controller that plugs directly into your TV via the scart socket.

More sophisticated ones let you record pictures from the cameras while you are out. If you are using CCTV cameras in dark areas, or want clearer images after dark, outside security lighting is advised.

3. Installing CCTV cameras

Make sure you place cameras out of reach to stop intruders tampering with them and they have a clear view of access areas - away from overhanging trees or bushes.

Drill a small hole through your wall or window frame so that you can feed the camera cable inside your home. From inside, the extension cable needs to be connected to the camera cable. Run the cables back of your TV. Plug the power adaptor for the camera control box into a 13amp socket. The scart plug then goes into the socket on the back of your television. When you are all connected up switch your TV to the AV channel to see the images from your camera. Check the camera view before finalising installation.

4. Security lighting

Generally, exterior security lighting can be divided into two types: dusk-to-dawn lighting and PIR lighting. Dusk-to-dawn units come on automatically as it gets dark and switch off again when it gets lighter at dawn.

PIR units are triggered by body heat, so only come on if someone approaches your home. These are usually the best option as

they use less electricity and should surprise and scare off any potential intruder.

5. Fitting security lights

Put your lights at least 2.5m off the ground. For PIR lighting make sure you point them so that passers-by don't trigger them off. Don't put the light near your boiler's flue as this can also set them off.

Drill a hole through the wall to the inside - make sure you line any holes with a plastic conduit. If you want to avoid drilling you may be able to feed the cable through your window frame or fascia board.

Make sure you turn off your power supply when fitting lights, then connect them according to the maker's instructions. Once you've connected the light it can then be fixed to the wall.

If you've chosen PIR lighting you can set the sensitivity control and adjust the length of time the light stays on once triggered. A few minutes is usually enough to disturb any intruder without annoying your neighbours if it goes off accidentally.

6. Best locks for secure external doors

The best and strongest locks have a 'kite mark' and are passed to British Standard BS3621. Most household insurance companies insist on these and they are recommended by crime prevention officers. As a rule, the more levers, pins or discs a lock has, the more difficult it is to pick.

When possible fit two locks on your front door - both to BS3621 standard. A mortice deadlock and a night latch. To protect your back door, go for a mortice sash lock to BS3621, together with top and bottom mortice bolts.

Words supplied by Homebase.

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HALESOWEN  Highland Ridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Traditional style detached house * Situated in very desirable location * Extended kitchen & lounge * Conservatory * Utility room * Three bedrooms * Pleasant rear garden <p>Offers in the region of £350,000</p>	HALESOWEN  Douglas Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Traditional style detached house * four bedrooms * gas boiler serving radiators * off road parking * extensive rear garden <p>Offers in the region of £255,000</p>	SMETHWICK  Devonshire Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Spacious semi detached house * Situated on good sized plot * Two reception rooms * Three bedrooms * Garage * Gas boiler serving radiators * Double glazing to windows where specified <p>Offers in the region of £179,500</p>	HALESOWEN  Eden Gardens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Spacious three storey house * Three bedrooms (2 ensuite) * Lounge * Quality kitchen * Sitting room * Utility * Enclosed gardens * Car parking space <p>£175,000</p>	HALESOWEN  Leasowe's Court 16 Red Leasowe's Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Open plan lounge/kitchen * Electric fire and surround, cooker and fridge * Double bedroom with 2 double wardrobes * Freshly decorated * Freshly cleaned carpets and new blinds * Drying area and allocated parking space <p>Monthly rent of £400</p>	OLDDBURY  87 Peel Way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Redecorated & improved flat * 2 bedrooms (with electric heating) * AFFORDABLE RENT * Gas fire to lounge * Shower over bath * New carpets * Available soon! <p>Monthly rent of £395</p>	WEST BROMWICH  66 Margaret Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Traditional terraced house * 2 bedrooms * 2 reception rooms * gas boiler/radiator heating system * carpets/floor coverings * convenient for west from town centre <p>Monthly rent of £465</p>
HALESOWEN  Clivedon Way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Semi detached house * prominent corner position * two bedrooms * detached garage * enclosed gardens <p>Offers in the region of £155,000</p>	HALESOWEN  Upper Ashley Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * End terraced house * tastefully presented * three bedrooms * principal bedroom with en-suite * pleasant rear garden * gas boiler heating radiators <p>Offers in the region of £128,000</p>	OLDDBURY  Swan Crescent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Attractive semi detached house * Ideally suited to first time purchaser * Three bedrooms * Bathroom with white suite * Double glazing * Gas boiler heating radiators <p>Offers in the region of £110,000</p>	BIRMINGHAM  Woodgate Valley Gravel Bank <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mid terraced property * Dining kitchen * Three bedrooms * Downstairs w.c. * Off road parking * Double glazing where specified <p>Offers in excess of £85,000</p>	CRADLEY HEATH  Flat 16 Beechwood Court 437 Halesowen Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Self contained bed-sit style flat * Separate fitted kitchen * Bathroom * Carpets & floor coverings * DG windows & electric heating * Car parking within communal grounds <p>Monthly rent of £300</p>	COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ROWLEY REGIS 72 Oldbury Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Shop with warehouse/storage area * Good-sized first floor offices * Main road position * Paved forecourt * 187.37 sq.m. (approx 2,016 sq.ft.) * Available now <p>Annual rent Of £8,500</p> <p>DUDLEY 11 Paganell Industrial Estate Turner Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ideal starter unit * Small private estate * Good security * Gated access * Roller shutter door * Washroom <p>Rent: £3,600 pa plus VAT</p> </p>	DUDLEY Netherton Unit 13 Central Park Industrial Estate Halesowen Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Workshop/warehouse * Established industrial estate * Well-presented with painted floor * Two toilets and small kitchen * Good natural lighting & roller shutter door <p>Annual rent Of £4,550</p> <p>OLDDBURY Suites 3, 4 & 5 Mercer House 780A Hagley Road West Refurbished office suites with car parking situated in a good main road location. SUITE 3: £3,300 per annum exclusive. SUITE 4: £1,950 per annum exclusive. SUITE 5: £4,600 per annum exclusive.</p>

Kia takes the honours in brand design competition

KIA MOTORS is one of the main winners in the first Automotive Brand Contest. This new international brand and design competition was organised by the German Design Council.

The judging panel declared Kia Motors the worthy winner in four categories.

For the exterior category, in which the design of the vehicle itself is the centre of attention, three Kia models were picked as winners: The compact Sportage SUV, the forthcoming Rio (on sale from September) and the new, athletic D-segment Kia Optima sedan.

Peter Schreyer, Kia's chief designer

said, "We are all exceedingly proud that Kia Motors has done so well in this new competition, which is very important within the automotive industry. By changing our basic design focus, we have given our brand a face, a distinctive identity."

Category

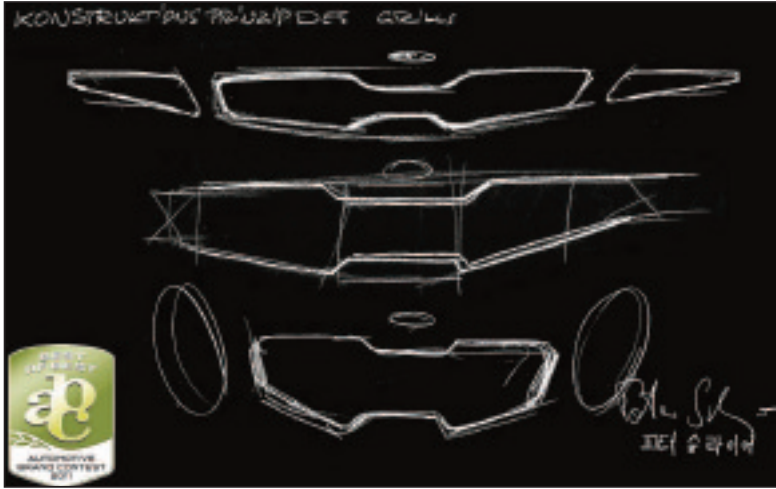
In the brand design category, where strategy and focus of the brand's overall design is rated, Kia was ranked "Best of Best".

Schreyer said: "The Best of Best title for Kia's new design identity in the brand design category is a great endorsement of the creative and professional work done by our entire inter-

national design team. The latest awards conferred on the Sportage and Optima, and the very first one to go to our latest model, the Rio, reflect the continuity of our efforts to uphold our own high design standards.

"All four awards are a fantastic acknowledgement of our strategy to position design as a core Kia brand promise," he said.

The German Design Council, organiser of the newly instituted Automotive Brand Contest, was founded in 1953 as an initiative of the German Federal Parliament, and now counts among the world's leading centres of excellence for communication and knowledge transfer in the field of design.



Sketches submitted by Peter Schreyer for the new Automotive Brand contest

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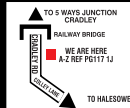
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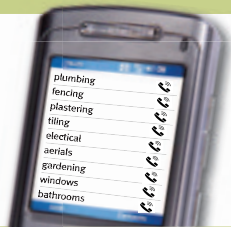
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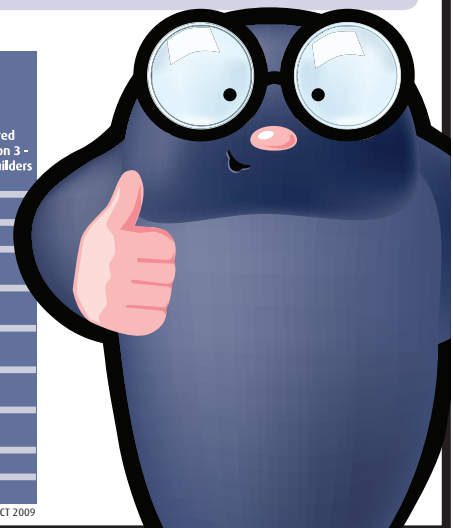
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* SOURCE: OMNITURE OCT 2009



sport

Late strike misery and Westwood sees red

HALESOWEN TOWN

Paulton Rovers 1 Halesowen Town 1
Halesowen were given a tough introduction to life in Division One South and West as Paulton grabbed a late equaliser to share the spoils at Winterfield Road.

The Yeltz, still under the tutelage of Shaun Cunningham, made a dream start to life in their new division when they took a sixth-minute lead. Lee Chilton's direct free kick beat Paulton's defensive wall and bounced up into the net after Justin Nisbett had been fouled on the edge of the area, *writes David Johnson.*

Three minutes later the hosts nearly responded when Ben Osman curled a free-kick over the Halesowen bar from a similar position.

With Paulton missing Ollie Price, Steve Bridges and Adam Mahdi through suspension, Osman led the line for the Bristol-based side and drove wide after 25 minutes.

The game then became slightly fractured with Andrew Westwood's frustration leading to the first of five yellow cards for Halesowen.

They went close directly from the second half kick-off with a long range effort but then lost Nisbett through injury and adopted a revised formation, with midfielder Marlon Walters replacing the striker. Jackson almost snatched a second goal when he capitalised on a sliced clear-

ance from goalkeeper Kyle Phillips with a 20 yard volley that struck the crossbar. Paulton's pressure gradually built with Halesowen dropping ever deeper in the final 20 minutes.

Craig Loxton's fierce drive from a wide angle was turned over the bar before Jamie Taylor somehow missed from just two yards out as the hosts searched for an equaliser. With six minutes to go the pressure told when Taylor took Loxton's pass and beat Evans from 15 yards.

Halesowen's keeper did well to collect a Brice header with a minute remaining, before the visitors were reduced to 10 men in the dying seconds when Westwood saw red for a second bookable offence.

NAVEED'S GOAL SEALS POINTS

HALESOWEN TOWN 1 NORTH LEIGH 0

SUPER-SUB Naveed Arshad was the hero for Halesowen as they earned their first three-point haul of the season with a narrow victory over North Leigh.

The hosts dominated proceedings on Tuesday night but strug-

gled to break the resistance of the Oxfordshire village side.

Early on Lee Chilton dragged a shot wide and Justin Nisbett flicked goalwards from a good position as Halesowen made a bright start.

Anthony Bruce's 17th minute free kick found Nathan Jackson but his disappointing header was

HALESOWEN TOWN

cleared and then Nisbett's shot was beaten away by North Leigh keeper Sam Warrell, with Chilton screwing the rebound wide.

Just before half-time full-back Nathaniel Caines did well to clear off the boot of Leigh's Andy McCabe in front of goal as the vis-

itors showed signs of improvement.

Tom Franklin's header was then caught by home keeper Paul Evans from the resulting corner, delivered by substitute Michael Hopkins.

There were few chance at the start of the second half until substitute Arshad provided an alter-

native option and more life up front for the Yeltz.

He received a yellow card for an over-enthusiastic challenge after just two minutes on the pitch but then struck over the bar in the 66th minute from Nisbett's pass.

Three minutes later Arshad grabbed what would be the winning goal with a superb low shot into the bottom corner from wide on the left.

It was nearly 2-0 soon after but Warrell did well to top Bruce's long-range shot onto the crossbar.

North Leigh had their chances to level with Mills planting a free header over the bar and home defender Smith having to clear off his own line.

With four minutes remaining Arshad almost added a second goal after collecting Chilton's cross in front of goal but goalkeeper Warrell made a fine blocking save.

Thrills and cricket spills

HIMLEY are inviting cricket fans to enjoy the thrills of floodlit T20 action throughout next week. The club are staging the Black Country Floodlit T20 tournament at its Stourbridge Road ground.

Fixtures: Monday, Himley v Wolverhampton 5.30pm, Walsall v Old Hill 7.40pm; Tuesday, Himley v Walsall 5.30pm, Old Hill v Wolverhampton 7.40pm; Wednesday, Wolverhampton v Walsall 5.30pm, Old Hill v Himley 7.40 pm, Thursday, Worcester-shire v Birmingham League All-Stars 6.30pm; Friday, final 6.30pm.

Thumping win sends out a bold message

CRADLEY TOWN 1 DUDLEY TOWN 4

West Midlands (Regional) League Premier Division

Dudley Town produced one of the shock results of the weekend as their new-look side sent a bold message to the rest of the West Midlands Premier.

Manager Andy Burgess was still without forward Dreniz Bala while Ben Stretton and Mark Garvey were both drafted back into the side following the 2-1 victory over Buxtehorne on the previous Wednesday.

It was a fairly even opening few minutes as Dudley's midfield dominance was countered by the ability of Cradley to break away. The Hammers should really have been ahead after seven minutes when former Dudley striker Nathaniel Waite stroked the ball wide of Garvey's post.

Dudley took the lead on the quarter of an hour mark.

A beautifully crafted piece of build-up play was executed by Alex Cowley and Todd Warner, which allowed Ben Stretton to come in unmarked from the right to tap the ball past Matt Jones.

Miss

It may well have been a different game if it was not for Garvey. With Matt Bailey through on goal the former Halesowen shot-stopper was able to get down and block the shot. With that miss the home side paid as the rest of the half was one-way traffic.

A fine header from Stretton connected with Anthony Cox's corner to extend the lead on 24 minutes.

The Robins were playing fluid football and Ben Store had a golden opportunity to make it three just past the half-hour mark but he was crowded out and could only place the ball wide.

But the visitors' travelling support were not made

to wait long to go yet another goal further ahead. Alex Cowley this time being allowed to run through and plant a firm shot past Jones on thirty-seven minutes that gave his side an unsalable half-time lead.

Dudley came back after the break in just as ravenous mood with Warner and Cox causing headache after headache to the Cradley defence.

Although it was Nikki Faux who had the best chance of extending the lead but his shot could only flash past the right hand post after soundly beating Jones. The home side's frustrations began to show with fifteen minutes remaining and this saw the dismissal of Matt Bailey after he lashed out at Robins captain Richard Langford and was shown a straight red.

Nathaniel Waite and substitute Pheon Jolly kept Dudley's backline in action but the visitors were just as equal to their threat.

Cradley did snatch a 90th minute consolation though when a neatly placed free-kick from Karl Gardner curled over Garvey.

But Dudley soon restored their three goal lead deep into stoppage time when Harry Williams headed home man-of-the-match Todd Warner's cross from the right.



Some of the 60 Halesowen College students who took part in a wheelchair basketball game

An inclusive sports lesson for students

STUDENTS were given the chance to experience life as a disabled athlete when staff organised a wheelchair basketball game in Halesowen. Sixty Halesowen College sport students took part in the event, which was designed to show how sport activities can be adapted to involve both able-bodied and disabled people. They completed

wheelchair basketball drills and skills activities, before competing against each other in a game. Cathy Mayall, sports organiser at Halesowen College which is based on Whittingham Road, said: "By playing the game in wheelchairs showed the students how sport can be adapted in many ways to make it as inclusive as possible to everyone."

Brilliant last-wicket stand not enough for winning total

DORRIDGE (20 PTS) 198-2 BEAT OLD HILL (2 PTS) 195-9 BY EIGHT WICKETS

The First XI lost the toss away at Dorridge and were put in to bat on a green wicket and with just seven runs on the board both the Old Hill openers were back in the pavilion and worse was to follow.

Mark Fisher, Nathan Round (27), Dan Wood (22), Carl Whyte and the unfortunate Nigel Davenport run out for 17, joined them as the score lurched to 89-7 in the 24th over, *writes Derek Griffiths.*

Then all hopes of a decent total seemed lost with only 123 runs on the board and the last pair at the wicket. However, a brilliant unbroken last wicket stand of 72 runs between Jared Daniels 51 not out, his maiden half-century for the first team, and last man Zafran Ali 24 not

out, they managed to get the score up to 195-9 in their allotted overs.

Dorridge batsmen then set about their task with gusto as Webb (56) and Butt (24) had 50 runs on the board in just 11 overs, aided by some indifferent bowling from the visitors.

Only Nigel Davenport with 1-21 off his eight overs, seemed able to stem the flow as Ball (77 not out) and T Mohammed (25 not out) steered the home side to an easy win with 20 overs to spare to complete Old Hill's misery.

OLD HILL (24 PTS) 233-6 BEAT WALSALL (3 PTS) 158 BY 75 RUNS.

The Second XI lost the toss against Walsall at Haden Hill and were put in to bat on a wicket which looked a little bit green but Old Hill's batsmen made light of this and steadily accumulated runs. Joe Thorn (13) and Alex Hills (39) put together an opening stand of 40 and then Nick Couzens (64) and Connor Smith (63) came together and they took the score to 195 with a partnership of 121 runs before being parted. Dan Jones (15 not out) and Jack Ellis then pushed the total along to 233-6 as the 50 overs were completed. In reply, Walsall found themselves staring defeat in the face as

Old Hill CC

they slumped to 47-5 in the 17th over with a blast of three quick wickets from Dan Jones. The visitors put up the shutters but the hosts stuck to their task as Dan Such (2-22), Connor Smith (1-20), Jack Ellis (1-18), Nick Couzens (1-10) and Jon Baig (1-36) chipped away at the batsmen. With the last pair at the wicket, Jones was re-introduced and took the last wicket with one ball of the penultimate over remaining to finish with excellent figures of 4-44 as Old Hill won the game by 75 runs to take maximum points.

OLD HILL (7 POINTS) 189 LOST TO BARNET GREEN (24 POINTS) 236 BY 47 RUNS

The Third XI won the toss at Wassell Grove against Barnet Green and chose to field. The visitors batsmen got off to a reasonable start and eventually posted a total of 236 assisted by 8 dropped catches as they were bowled out in the 50th over. Best bowler for Old Hill was Danny Claves with 4-43. In reply, the only home batsman to get going was Reece Shilcock who remained unbeaten on 73 as the Old Hill

innings closed on 189 in the 38th over. Although beaten, Old Hill remain on top of the

BARNET GREEN (17 PTS) 213-9 DREW WITH OLD HILL (5 PTS) 139-9

The Fourths won the toss and asked Barnet Green to bat first in their away fixture at Cherry Hill Road and the home side scored 213-9 from their 45 overs. Old Hill's reply got off to a good start as Izzy Khan (35) and Ryan Dimmock (27) put together a stand of 78 runs. Unfortunately, when the stand was broken no other Old Hill batsman could get going and it was left to young Rob Lloyd to save the day with a dogged 14 not out as the visitors held on to a creditable draw.

OLD HILL (0 PTS) 233 LOST TO BELBROUGHTON (10 PTS) 224-8 BY TWO WICKETS.

The Sunday XI batted first against Belbroughton and scored 233 in 40 overs. Joe Thorn top scored with 77 and Dan Jones hit 30. After losing two early wickets, the visitors set a cracking pace and had 105 runs on the board in the 14th over but wickets began to tumble. With Belbroughton only fielding 10 players, the last pair came together at 198-8 in the 29th over but survived numerous bowling

changes to see the visitors home with an unbeaten stand of 38 runs. The pick of Old Hill bowlers were Nathan Davies (2-30), Nick Couzens (2-33) and Dan Jones (2-36).

ECB NATIONAL CLUB T20 COMPETITION AREA

FINALS AT LONGTON

Old Hill played hosts Longton in the first semi-final and having won the toss decided to field. Longton posted 159 off their 20 overs but Old Hill managed to reach their target in the last over. Hyde then beat Mochdre in the second semi-final. In the final, Old Hill again won the toss and invited Hyde to bat. They Hyde got off to an electric start with a 50 partnership off the first four overs as they set a target of 183 for Old Hill to chase.

The batsmen started well and the upped the rate in mid innings until eight runs were needed for victory off the last two balls. With just a single scored off the penultimate ball, a six was needed off the last ball to bring the scores level. This was achieved by Ed Denham.

When the excitement had subsided and the rule book checked, it turned out that Hyde had won on a faster scoring rate in the first five overs. So near and yet so far.

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